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News Release

CONVICTED CHILD SEX TOURIST RECEIVES 17-YEAR SENTENCE

LOS ANGELES – A San Diego man who pleaded guilty to federal charges in a child sex tourism case was sentenced this morning to 17 years in federal prison and lifetime supervision. Edilberto Datan, 61, received the prison sentence in United States District Court here for traveling to the Philippines to have sex with disadvantaged teenage boys, whom he paid with food, clothing and money.

Datan pleaded guilty in March, admitting that he had sex with four Filipino boys, 14 to 15 years of age. Datan also pleaded guilty to producing child pornography outside the United States by taking sexually explicit photographs of eight underage boys.

In addition to the prison term, Datan will be required to pay restitution to his victims. The amount of restitution will be finalized at a hearing scheduled for August 29 before United States District Judge R. Gary Klausner.

Datan, a naturalized citizen of Filipino descent, was arrested in November 2004 by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents at Los Angeles International Airport. ICE opened an investigation into the retired California Department of Real Estate auditor after his name surfaced in an international investigation into a Belarus-based company called Regpay that provided billing services to subscribers of child pornography websites.

Datan was intercepted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at LAX as he returned from a trip to Cebu Island in the Philippines. CBP inspectors contacted ICE agents after finding four computer memory sticks and a digital camera in Datan's luggage. A review of the material on those memory sticks showed they contained some 150 sexually explicit images of teenage Filipino boys. While 18 different boys were photographed naked and in sexual poses, only eight of the children were identified and found by the Philippine National Police and ICE agents. The cooperation of the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Department of Justice was instrumental in this prosecution.

The day following Datan's arrest, ICE agents searched his San Diego home where they seized additional evidence of Datan's sexual interest in children, including sexually explicit photographs of child victims from Datan's prior trips to the Philippines and a large collection of child pornography purchased from internet websites.

“We are putting pedophiles on notice that ICE has agents on the ground here and overseas who stand ready to pursue and prosecute those who sexually exploit children,” said Michael Unzueta, special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in San Diego.

Datan is the second person to be found guilty of child sex tourism charges in the Central District of California under the provisions of the PROTECT Act. The first, John W. Seljan, was convicted in a bench trial in Orange County and sentenced in March to 20 years in prison.

The PROTECT Act substantially strengthened federal laws against predatory crimes involving children outside the United States by adding new crimes, increasing sentences and modifying the burden of proof requirements for federal prosecutors to bring charges.

Datan’s arrest is part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE enforcement initiative launched last year to identify, investigate, arrest and, in the case of foreign nationals, deport child sex predators. Since the initiative began in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 5,800 individuals nationwide, including more than 1,400 in California.

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.